

NEWS RELEASE

**INDIANA
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**



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Joseph E. Kernan, Governor

Alan D. Degner, Commissioner

Kernan Awards Grant to Northeastern Indiana Workforce Investment Board

Indianapolis, Ind. – With his focus on strengthening Northeastern Indiana's workforce, today Gov. Joe Kernan awarded the Northeastern Indiana Workforce Investment Board a \$300,240 Energizing Indiana's Workforce grant.

Administered by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, the Northeastern Indiana Workforce Investment Board (WIB) represents Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wells and Whitley counties. Using the grant, the WIB will offer 50 scholarships to area companies to help employees pursue high tech certifications and it has purchased a computer-based, self-paced learning program that is associated with WorkKeys, a centerpiece of the governor's Indiana@Work initiative.

"Having the tools and the opportunities to train our workforce is essential if we are to remain competitive. That's why this project is so important," said Kernan. "As our economy continues to evolve, so must our workforce. Working with local partners and reaching out to our employers and our workers is essential. We applaud the Northeastern Indiana WIB on this effort and look forward to seeing its results."

Energizing Indiana's Workforce grants are designed to encourage the state's Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to create stronger links between economic and workforce development. Specifically, the funds are used to support efforts to upgrade the skills of the Hoosier workforce in the four industry sectors: life sciences, advanced manufacturing, high-tech distribution and information technology.

"These grants not only support the goals of Energize Indiana, they also support the state's workforce development initiative, Indiana@Work. By providing this funding to the WIBs, we can work together to develop programs to support the needs of our workers and employers," added Kernan.

"This grant gives us an opportunity to help employers with the training and development needs of their workforce," said Patty Weddle, President and CEO of the Northeast Indiana WIB. "Whether of job seeker or a person already in the workforce, those interested in self-guided learning will be able to do so through the WorkOne offices, libraries, community resource centers, social service agencies and the Internet. Anyone who wants to improve his or her basic skills will be able to do so. This program makes life-long learning accessible to all."

Indiana@Work is comprehensive workforce development plan, announced by the governor in his State-of-the-State address. The program combines the efforts of DWD and the Indiana Department of Commerce in an effort to match jobseekers with companies that have openings. It also provides training funds to businesses, for potential employees who are facing a "skills gap" that could keep them from attaining higher-pay jobs. And, eventually, Indiana@Work will help workers develop "e-resumes" that they can carry with them throughout their careers.

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Through its various programs and initiatives, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development is charged with continually improving the Hoosier workforce by assisting companies create new jobs and improve employee skills. The agency offers a variety of training and educational grants, partners with the state's 27 WorkOne Centers, administers the unemployment insurance system, provides labor market information, assists employers with preparing workers for layoffs and closures and operates a statewide job placement service.

For more information on this, or any other DWD program, contact Jeff Harris at 317/ 232-3396 or visit the web site at www.workforce.IN.gov.

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